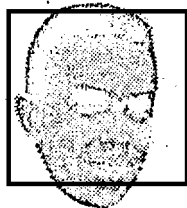


A Bookman's Notebook

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Spies Are Running In From the Cold

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William Hegan

A BOOK TITLED "The Invisible Government," vastly critical of U. S. intelligence services, may or may not be published next Monday. Before publication it has caused considerable alarm in Government ranks, especially among members of the intelligence community who feel it is a breach of the national security. Marquis Childs, the Washington Post columnist, reported that unnamed "high Government officials" are so upset over some revelations in the book that it would be to the Government's advantage "to buy up all advance copies on condition the book would be revised."



The authors are two respected, hard-working young Washington reporters, Thomas B. Ross of the Chicago Sun-Times, and David Wise of the New York Herald Tribune. The "invisible government" they describe includes the Central Intelligence Agency; the National Security Agency; Army, Navy and Air Force intelligence services; the Atomic Energy Commission; the FBI and the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research.

Combined, these groups annually spend some \$4 billion of the taxpayers' money. Often, the authors suggest, they are at war with one another; their effectiveness is questionable; they are often not responsible to higher authority, Congress or even

the President. Is the book a breach of security?

No, says Bennett Cerf, president of Random House, its publisher. Nobody in the Government has suggested to his firm any breach of security. Can the book be suppressed? Publishers' Weekly reports that Random House has received many letters from people anxious to order the book "before the CIA takes any action on it." Rather than a security breach, it appears to be simply sound legwork by an inventive team of reporters who have assembled facts from many sources.

Wise and Ross state that their book "is an attempt to describe a hidden American institution which the American people, who finance it, have a right to know about."

Other unspecified Washington quarters suggest that the real problem is that Wise and Ross make our clandestine specialists appear to be inept, musical comedy spies. An example:

Contrary to belief, CIA men are decorated for their valor. "Despite the fact that he was eased out after the Bay of Pigs . . . Richard M. Bissell received a secret intelligence medal honoring him for his years as deputy director for plans. There was no public announcement of the award, and Bissell was not allowed to talk about his medal, to show it to anyone or to wear it. As far as the CIA was concerned, officially the medal did not exist. The Invisible Government had awarded him an invisible medal."

Breach of security? Maybe the book suggests only that this big, ominous, expensive secret machine is really run by the Keystone Kops.

The Invisible Government. By David Wise and Thomas B. Ross. Random House, 361 pp.; \$5.95.